

# Walking the Healthy Talk:

How staff wellness can make a difference  
in classrooms, schools and communities

## DESCRIPTION:

Staff wellness programs are one important way to enhance the quality of education in Montana schools. Healthy employees can act as role models for children; can be more enthusiastic on the job; and can reduce insurance costs for school districts. Staff wellness does not have to be expensive in order to be effective. Join registered dietitian Dayle Hayes and other Montana health educators to learn how simple programs that encourage healthful eating and physical activity can provide big benefits to you and your school.

## OBJECTIVES:

- Discuss the impact of staff wellness on behavior issues in classrooms, schools and communities.
- Describe options and opportunities for promoting staff wellness in Montana schools.
- List resources for planning and implementing effective staff wellness programs with minimal time and limited budgets.

## SPONSOR:

**Montana Team Nutrition Program of the Office of Public Instruction**

- Contact **Katie Bark, RD** at 406-994-5641 or [kbark@state.mt.us](mailto:kbark@state.mt.us) for additional assistance with nutrition education for school-aged children or school nutrition issues.

## PRESENTER:

### **DAYLE HAYES, MS, RD**

Dayle is well known to Montana audiences for her entertaining presentations and her positive solutions to everyday nutrition problems. Dayle is a nutrition consultant to Eat Right Montana, Montana Beef Council, Deaconess Billings Clinic, and other Montana organizations. She writes a weekly nutrition column in the Billings Gazette and appears monthly on KTVQ's Daybreak and Noon News. Dayle also travels around the US – sharing her nutrition wisdom with health care providers, school food personnel, college students, and others who want to eat better, quickly and easily.

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# Simple Ways to Promote Wellness at Work

## 1. **Start a fresh fruit snack basket.**

Rotate shopping duties (once or twice a week) and charge 25 or 50 cents for a piece of fruit. Make fruit a cheaper and easier option than visiting the vending machine.

## 2. **Take 10 (or 15) while training or meeting.**

Five, ten, or fifteen minutes of physical activity can pay off during training days and important meetings. Activity helps relieve tension – and boosts brainpower too!

## 3. **Plan to “meet and eat” with health in mind.**

Establish easy guidelines for foods and beverages brought (or bought) for office meetings and celebrations. Invite people to share their best tasting, healthiest recipes.

## 4. **Get a walking group going.**

Peer “pressure” can work in positive ways. People are more likely to get going when they are accountable to someone else. Make it formal, make it informal, just do it!

## 5. **Offer regular office “health day” activities.**

Set regular times, like an hour or two a month, to explore healthy options as a staff. Tour a fitness facility, try a new restaurant, visit a farmer’s market or play a game.

## 6. **Increase your vending options.**

Tired of the same old choices? Visit with the vending company about healthier options – like beef jerky, animal crackers, nuts, trail mix or peanut butter crackers.

## 7. **Add art in the stairwells.**

Want people to take the stairs instead of the elevator? A few murals (painted by school art classes or talented employees) can really increase stairway traffic.

## 8. **E.mail motivational messages.**

Short, fun tips via computer screens can remind staff to – sit up straight, stand and stretch, eat a fruit, drink some water, take a walk or add a veggie to lunch.

## 9. **Create health-enhancing challenges.**

People enjoy a bit of healthy competition, especially with delicious prizes (a fruit and cheese basket!). Challenge staff to increase their daily steps or eat 5 A Day, everyday!

## 10. **Put up a basketball hoop.**

Put up a real hoop outside – or a child-size/foam ball toy inside. Keep a few balls at a reception desk – and encourage people to borrow them for breaks or at lunch.



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# Tasty Tips for Eating Well at Work

**1. Pack food and beverages – for the week ahead.**

Spend an hour getting organized on Sunday – and save time and money all week long. Wash fruit, bag veggies, slice cheese and fill water bottles for the week ahead.

**2. Stock up on nutrition.**

Fill your desk drawers, office fridge and briefcase with a healthy variety of tasty snacks and quick meals – like instant oatmeal, trail mix and microwave-able entrees.

**3. Pack lunch while you cook dinner.**

You can cook once and eat twice – by making “planned-overs” at dinnertime. Make an extra serving or two – and pack them to-go as you clean up the evening meal.

**4. Take advantage of convenience.**

Supermarkets feature an amazing array of single-serve health food options – perfect for desktop dining. Go for cereal in a cup, tuna in a pouch or fruit in pop-top cans.

**5. Add nutrition to your commute.**

It’s easy, it’s tasty – and it’s doesn’t have to be messy! Pack a piece of string cheese, a squeezable yogurt, an apple, or a bag of grape tomatoes for the car, bus or train.

**6. Pump up with protein power.**

Many office treats are all sugar and fat. For long-lasting brain and body power, add some protein – with nuts, seeds, soynuts, yogurt, milk, jerky and nutrition bars.

**7. Switch to a fruit dish.**

Tempted by the cookie jar or candy dish? Switch to a fresh fruit bowl or a jar filled with different, delicious, dried fruit – mango, pineapple, apricots, plums and raisins.

**8. Drink to your health.**

Staying well-hydrated helps you think more clearly, be less cranky and do less mindless munching. It is also one of the best skin treatments in the world.

**9. Treat yourself well.**

When it’s time to eat, give yourself a real break. Stop working, stop rushing – and give yourself a few minutes to really savor whatever you are eating.

**10. Use the K.I.S.S. principle for candy.**

Keep It Small Sweetie! Skip those expensive, high-calorie, king-size bars. Slowly savor a chocolate kiss – or enjoy a “fun-size” version of your favorite candy treat.



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# Ten Steps to Moving More at Work

- 1. Walk with a colleague, walk with a client.**  
Invite a co-worker to join you for a walking break, a meeting or an appointment. Walking and talking can open up new conversation topics and create strong bonds.
- 2. Choose a fitness friend.**  
Being accountable to someone else often makes it easier to fit fitness in. Set up specific times to walk together – or to try out new activities like a yoga class.
- 3. Sit up straight.**  
Sound too simple? Actually, sitting up straight and tightening your stomach muscles can make a big difference in your posture (and it helps prevent back pain too!).
- 4. Walk while you wait.**  
Waiting for the train or the bus? Walk around the station – or up and down the block. Waiting for an appointment? Stroll down the hall or around your office.
- 5. Stretch your body (and your mind).**  
A few good stretches can help relax your body and clear your mind. You can stretch while working at a computer, while talking on phone, or just for the fun of it!
- 6. Reward yourself with some activity.**  
Take 10 for activity whenever you can. After working diligently at your desk, take 10 minutes to hand-deliver a file, set up a meeting in person or walk to the copier.
- 7. Plan a regular walking route.**  
Some people love a routine. Map out a regular route (or routes) inside and/or outside, so you can get up and get moving, without having to think about it at all.
- 8. Use your legs for errands.**  
Need to go to the bank, the post office, the dentist or the hairdresser? Need to deliver some papers to a colleague? Use your legs to walk (or bike) there and back.
- 9. Become a “stair master.”**  
Think you need a fancy machine for your backside? Think again! Build beautiful legs and thighs for free. Just take the stairs (up and down) whenever you can.
- 10. Explore your workplace options.**  
Do you always use the same restroom, the same water fountain and the same route to your office? Enjoy a few extra steps by using facilities that are farther away!



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# Ten Tips for Smarter Snacking

**1. Check your HUNGER level.**

Are you actually hungry? Or are you tired? Bored? Lonely? Happy? Or did you just see a food commercial on TV? If you aren't hungry, skip the snack until you are.

**2. Check your FLUID level.**

Are you thirsty – rather than hungry? Since it's easy to confuse the signals for hunger and thirst, try drinking a refreshing glass of water before you dig into a snack.

**3. Check PORTION SIZES.**

Most super-sized snacks are loaded with fat, sugar and calories. If you want a sweet or salty treat, start with a small size or share a biggie size with a friend.

**4. Check food labels and FACTS.**

What you don't know can come as a surprise to your waistline! 300+ calories in a nutrition bar?! 400+ calories in a latte!? 600+ calories in a fancy cinnamon bun?!

**5. Pay ATTENTION to your snack.**

It's easy to overeat (and still not feel satisfied) if you eat while driving, reading or watching TV. Slow down and enjoy your snack; you'll eat less and enjoy it more.

**6. Pay attention to PROTEIN.**

Many snack foods are low in protein, as well as high in sugar and fat. Foods with protein (meat, dairy, nuts and soy) provide more nutrients and longer staying power.

**7. Grab some NUTS.**

A small handful of nuts (about an ounce) can satisfy your craving for something salty – and provide some super nutrition (vitamins, minerals and protein) at the same time.

**8. Grab some VEGGIES.**

Nature's fast food makes an excellent on-the-run snack. Keep sliced veggies ready to go in the fridge – and fill up a small bag whenever you head out the door.

**9. Grab some FRUIT.**

Feeling like something sweet and flavorful? Fresh, dried or canned, fruit is a luscious treat anytime of day. Keep several single-serve fruit choices at home and at the office.

**10. Grab a POWER DRINK.**

Soft drinks offer little – except excess calories and caffeine! Looking for some liquid energy? Try low-fat or fat-free milk – and build some beautiful bones and teeth too!



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# Eating Together for Health and Fitness

Sometimes very simple changes can make a big difference. Increasing the meals that your family eats together can make a big difference in your health, happiness and even your finances. No time to make a meal? No problem, family dinners are easier than you think.

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## WHY eat together as a family?

- ❶ Families save time, money and hassle.
- ❷ Children learn skills, values and traditions.
- ❸ Children have fewer behavior problems.
- ❹ Children do better in school and on tests.
- ❺ Children and adults get the nutrients they need.
- ❻ Everyone treasures mealtime memories.

## HOW can YOU do dinner quickly and easily?

- ❶ **Plan a weekly menu:** Make it simple or make it detailed. The key is to have a plan for shopping and cooking. Involve the whole family – less stress for any one person.
- ❷ **Cook once, eat twice:** Cut down dramatically on your prep time. Cook and freeze larger batches of key ingredients, like ground beef for tacos and spaghetti sauce.
- ❸ **Keep the cupboard stocked:** Pack your pantry (and freezer) with staples like canned beans, tuna and fruit; pasta, rice and baking mixes; and frozen vegetables.
- ❹ **Use the sandwich advantage:** Nothing is quicker than a sandwich – breakfast (toaster waffles), lunch (whole grain bread) or dinner (pita pocket or tortilla wrap).

## WHAT foods make the perfect family dinner?

- ❶ **Grains:** High-energy carbohydrates, especially whole grains, have a place on every dinner table. A bread machine (with a timer) can serve it up hot – right on schedule.
- ❷ **Meat, fish, poultry and beans:** High-quality proteins provide “muscle” for healthy meals. Do a combo, like beef and beans in chili for an extra fiber boost!
- ❸ **Vegetables and fruit:** Any meal is perfect for produce. Pack one-third to one-half of your plate with a colorful bonanza of fresh, frozen or canned fruits and veggies.
- ❹ **Dairy:** A glass of cold, refreshing milk (1% or less) is the beverage of choice for healthy families. Cheese, cottage cheese and yogurt are other tasty calcium sources.



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# Playing Together for Health and Fitness

Being active is one of the best (and easiest) ways for American families to spend time together. With a small investment in time (and maybe a little equipment), your family can enjoy a long list of physical and emotional benefits. What is your family waiting for?

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## WHY play together as a family?

- ☐ A family that plays together, stays together.
- ☐ Regular fun activities lead to physical fitness.
- ☐ Children who are physically fit do better in school.
- ☐ Being active helps maintain a healthy weight.
- ☐ Active play is good for kids - and their parents too!

## WHAT activities work best for families?

Kids need 30 to 60 minutes of daily activity for optimal health. P.E. classes and athletics count. So do sports like Little League and soccer, swim classes and family activities.

- ☐ **Aerobic activities:** Walk the dog. Bike to the store. Swing at the park. Dance down the sidewalk. Slide at the playground. Fun, fun, fun for everyone!
- ☐ **Helping activities:** Kids like to help and “chores” can be fun with the right attitude. Sweep the floor to music. See how quickly you can clean up the yard.
- ☐ **Fun activities:** Focus on the fun – and nobody will feel like they are doing exercise. Kite flying? Chasing bubbles in the wind? Splashing in a pool?

## HOW can we fit fitness into a busy schedule?

- ☐ **Walk to and from school:** If you live near school, start walking, biking or riding a scooter as often as you can. Go both ways – or just one way. After school, spend time at the playground or stop at the park for a game of folf (Frisbee golf) or baseball.
  - ☐ **Create a fun zone at home:** Turn off the TVs, computers and video games. Make a place to play inside (clear a piece of carpet to toss foam balls or dance) and outside (flower or veggie gardens, basketball hoops or an old fashioned tree house).
  - ☐ **Join a club:** Sometimes it is safer or warmer to play indoors. Check out the options in your area. Some health clubs and gyms have fun family programs. Boys and Girls Clubs and YMCA/YWCAs often provide free (or low cost) family memberships.
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# Healthy Families 2003

Fit and Healthy, Anytime, Anywhere: Taking charge of your eating and your life

## January 2003

- Nutrition and Physical Activity, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE!!

## February 2003

- Healthy options in the morning

## March 2003

- Healthy options at noon

## April 2003

- Healthy options in the evening

## May 2003

- Healthy options throughout the day

## June 2003

- Healthy options at work

## July 2003

- Healthy options on the road

## August 2003

- Healthy options while camping

## September 2003

- Healthy options at school

## October 2003

- Healthy options for hunting

## November 2003

- Healthy options in restaurants

## December 2003

- Healthy options at celebrations



**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*

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Eat Right Montana **HEALTHY FAMILIES** Monthly Packets @

[www.montanadieticassociation.org/promo.html](http://www.montanadieticassociation.org/promo.html)

Free packets of information and handouts – PDFs to download and distribute.

**Guidelines for Offering Healthy Foods at Meetings, Seminars, and Catered Events @**

[www.ahc.umn.edu/ahc\\_content/colleges/sph/sph\\_news/Nutrition.pdf](http://www.ahc.umn.edu/ahc_content/colleges/sph/sph_news/Nutrition.pdf)

Great ideas from the University of Minnesota School of Public Health – yummy!

**Fit City/Fit Schools @** [www.healthcollaborative.net/fitcity/FitCityhome.html](http://www.healthcollaborative.net/fitcity/FitCityhome.html)

The Bexar County Community Health Collaborative (San Antonio, Texas) has developed some excellent “Healthy Vending Criteria” for worksites and schools.

**America’s Walking @** [www.pbs.org/americaswalking/](http://www.pbs.org/americaswalking/)

This site, based on the TV show, covers everything about walking – from personal health and fitness to making neighborhoods and workplaces more “walkable.”

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Sponsored by the **Montana Team Nutrition Program** of the Office of Public Instruction.

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